

Martina Simeti

GIOVANNA SILVA

*Re-membering Turi Simeti*

in collaboration with Fondazione Archivio Turi Simeti

25 February 2022 – 19 March 2023

Opening Thursday 24 March, 4 – 9 pm

From 24 February to 19 March 2022, almost a year after the death of Turi Simeti, the gallery belonging to the artist's daughter, Martina Simeti, will host a photographic show by Giovanna Silva, promoted by the newly established Fondazione Archivio Turi Simeti, in her exhibition space, Via Benedetto Marcello 44.

Giovanna Silva visited Turi Simeti's studio shortly after his death. The photos were taken on several different occasions, in close succession. The hundred or so shots feature details from the studio. Each shot is repeated, with an almost imperceptible difference from the previous one, as if each immersion in this space afforded a different level of insight, a discovery renewed each time. There are no overarching visions but dense details emerging from his life story. "It was more than immersing oneself in a studio. It's a home, an opus and a lifetime." What emerges is a collage of often similar fragments, images that portray the space through elements of those who inhabited it: Turi Simeti along with his partner Essila Burello, who was also taken away by the pandemic shortly after the artist. The installation is designed with the technical support of architect Luciano Giorgi (LGB architetti), who also designed the gallery spaces.

Turi Simeti (1929–2021) was born in Alcamo in the province of Trapani. After a period in Rome of almost ten years, in which he worked with Tano Festa and Franco Angeli, and after spending time wandering around various parts of Europe, Simeti reached Milan in 1965 in order to take part in the Zero Avangarte exhibition, organised by Nanda Vigo in Lucio Fontana's studio. Shortly afterwards, he settled in the Lombard capital for good. His first studio was in the 'workshop neighbourhood' in Sesto San Giovanni, where a constructor and collector had made available a series of spaces to be used by the artists as studios. He was joined by Enrico Castellani, to whom he was bound by a close friendship, as well as Agostino Bonalumi, Arturo Vermi, Lino Marzulli, Hidetoshi Nagasawa, Antonio Scaccabarozzi, Aldo Tagliaferro and many others. After a period spent in New York, in 1971 he moved to Viale Baligny, where he found a studio next to the flat where he lived with his wife Carla Ortelli and daughter Martina. Here too he was surrounded by other artists, including Claudio Olivieri, Bruno Di Bello, Riccardo Camoni, Armando Marrocco and Ugo Guarino. In 1996, he finally moved to Via Pier Lombardo along with his partner Essila Burello. Simeti both lived and worked in this large space on the ground floor. The living area, opening onto the work area, was separated by a billiard table. Until 2015, three large worktops were placed in the centre of the space together with various tools and instruments. After that date, Simeti moved his work activities into an adjoining

room, while the loft remained solely for living use. The walls were neatly arranged with a selection of Simeti's production, starting from his first works in 1961 right up to his final works.

The career of Turi Simeti spanned the history of Italian art in the second half of the twentieth century. From 1961 onwards, his art was based on abstraction, monochromes, and the oval. Simeti maintained this minimalist commitment to a shape that can be perceived under the surface of the canvas like a fundamental sign pursuing its artistic radicalness. He never departed from the aesthetic direction he chose. Turi Simeti's work invites us to a spatial and meditative experience of painting, as part of the monochrome adventure that took place in the second half of the twentieth century in Italy and around the world.

The Fondazione Archivio Turi Simeti in Milan sees the light at the request of the artist's family. The mission, in keeping with the existing Archive, consists of promoting the work of the Sicilian-born painter, who moved to Milan in the mid-1960s.

The Archive will stage initiatives and undertake projects including exhibitions and catalogues, but will also invite young artists to dialogue with Simeti's work, with the aim of bringing the new generations closer to one of the leading protagonists of Italian post-war abstract research.